

January 14, 2004

Who Cares for Children In South Dakota?

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**Child Care and Early Education Workforce Survey
Executive Summary**



Data compiled & analyzed by
South Dakota KIDS COUNT
and
the University of South Dakota
School of Education

Despite the vital role child care and early education professionals play in communities throughout South Dakota, over 1/3 leave their jobs each year due to low wages and lack of benefits. Turnover negatively impacts the quality of early care and education children receive.

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What do National Studies Tell Us?

- In 1999, the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center reported findings from the Abecedarian Study that demonstrated the long-lasting benefits of quality early care and education that includes good adult-child ratios, professionally trained and fairly-compensated teachers, and appropriate curriculum for children. At age 21, the children who received quality early childhood services were more likely to:
 - ★ Score higher on IQ, reading and math tests
 - ★ Be enrolled in or graduate from a 4 year college
 - ★ Delay parenthood
 - ★ Be gainfully employed
- The quality of child care classroom practices are related to the children's cognitive development (e.g. measures of math and language abilities), while the closeness of the adult-child relationship influences the children's social development (e.g. interactions with peers and behaviors). Children who are at risk of not doing well in school are affected more by the quality of child care experiences than other children. ("The Children of the Cost, Quality, and Outcomes Study Go to School Executive Summary", June 1999)
- At least one-third of the child care workforce leaves the job each year. This is nearly double the overall job turnover rate in the United States. (Taking on Turnover, Whitebook and Bellm, 1999)
- Continually high turnover threatens a program's ability to provide quality, consistent services to children. (National Child Care Staffing Study, 1988-1997, Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips 1998)
- Low salaries contribute to the turnover of trained caregivers and early educators in great numbers resulting in overall lower levels of teacher qualifications and quality of services provided to children. ("The Children of the Cost, Quality, and Outcomes Study Go to School Executive Summary", June 1999)



Why is Turnover in Early Childhood Programs an Issue in South Dakota?

Employee recruitment and retention is a critical factor for businesses in every community throughout this country. For the majority of working parents, the availability of quality child care is directly linked to their own ability to obtain and maintain employment. In South Dakota, the relevance of this issue is highlighted by the following statistics:

- The state of South Dakota has the highest percent of working mothers in the nation. 77.5% of mothers with children ages birth to 6 years are in the work force. The national average is 63.5%. (South Dakota KIDS COUNT Factbook 2003)
- South Dakota also ranks 4th in the nation for the number of children living with securely employed parents. In this state, 82% of children had at least one parent working in full-time year round employment. (National KIDS COUNT Data Book CPS 2000 - 2002)
- In South Dakota, 47% of all children under age 6 are in paid child care. This is nearly twice the national average and more per capita than any other state in the nation. Approximately 28,500 children attend child care programs in communities located throughout the state while their parents work. (National KIDS COUNT Data Book CPS 2000 - 2002)

The following information, reported by the office of Child Care Services Federal Fiscal Year 2003 reports demonstrates the need for public support for quality child care services for working families:

- 88% (7,868) children of families receiving child care assistance in this state utilized regulated (licensed or registered) child care arrangements. 12% (1,024) children were cared for by relatives and/or family friends.
- 993 regulated and 685 unregulated (relatives and/or family friends) cared for children of families receiving child care assistance.
- A total of 5,188 families (8,892 children) received child care assistance. 90% of those families (4,669) who received child care assistance in South Dakota were single parents.



Since more children than ever before are in some type of child care setting for all or part of each day, it is important to ask, "Who is caring for South Dakota's youngest citizens?"

How Was the South Dakota Early Childhood Workforce Study Conducted?

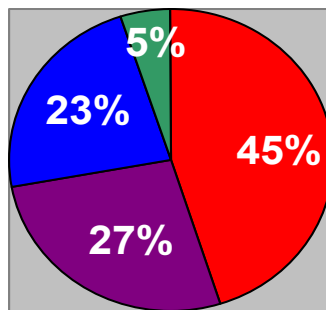
In the Spring of 2003, the South Dakota Alliance for Children asked South Dakota KIDS COUNT and the University of South Dakota School of Education to conduct an early childhood workforce survey. The survey was mailed to child care centers, group family child care, Out-of-School-Time and Head Start programs in South Dakota. Family Child Care homes were not surveyed. A total of 156 surveys were returned for an overall response rate of 40%. The response rate by program type:

- 70 Child care centers
- 43 Group family child care programs
- 36 Out-of-School-Time programs
- 7 Head Start programs



Responding programs were located in 84 cities across the state, representing 46 counties. The results portray factors that influence approximately 1,900 program employees and 2,499 children.

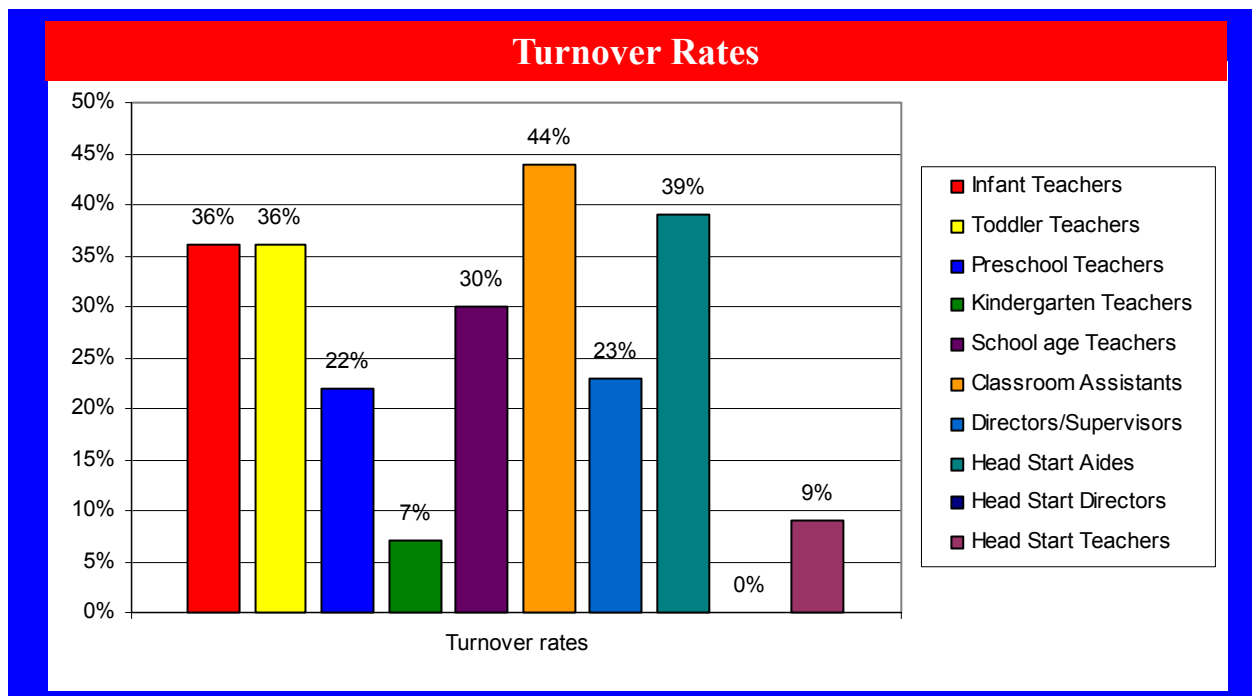
Survey Response Rate



- 70 Child Care Centers
- 43 Group Family Programs
- 36 OST Programs
- 7 Head Start Programs

Turnover rates in South Dakota

- In a one year period, the average turnover rate in child care programs, was the greatest for classroom assistants (44%). The second highest turnover rate was for infant and toddler caregivers (36%). The average rate of turnover for Out-of-School-Time staff was 30%, followed by a 22% turnover rate for employees who worked with preschool-age children.
- Overall, turnover rates for Head Start positions were lower than the rates reported for similar positions in child care programs.
- The data also indicated an average of 23% turnover in a one year period for child care program directors, assistant directors and supervisors. Work related stress was related to higher turnover rates for these leadership positions.
- The majority of the survey respondents report that they spend between two and four weeks in the hiring process to replace an employee who leaves. Survey respondents indicated an average stress level of 6.3 (on a scale of 1-10) associated with employee turnover issues.



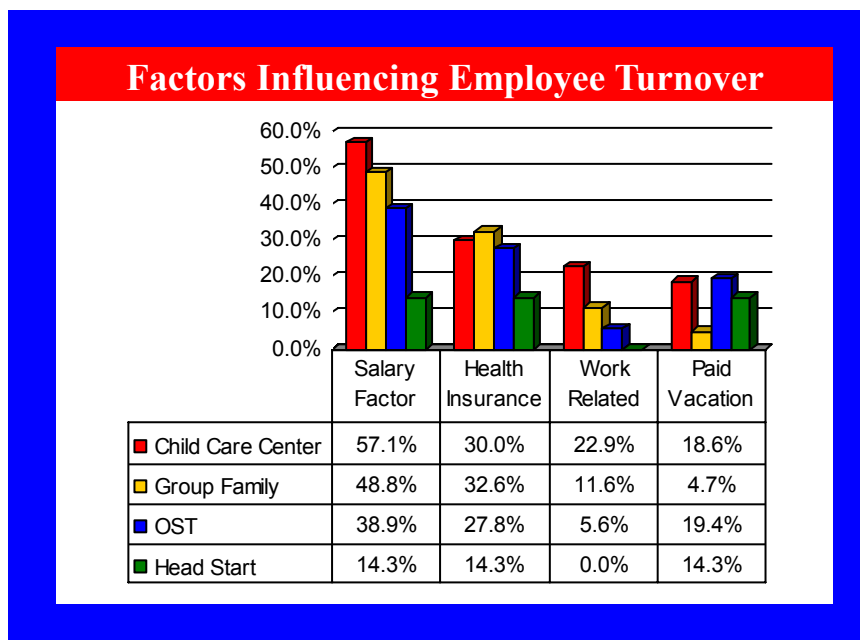
Director Perspectives On Turnover

A child care program director shared the following comment regarding the challenges that programs face in their effort to recruit and train a quality workforce:

"It's hard to find someone who wants to work with young children for a low salary; and, it is hard to train people who aren't used to working in a fast paced, quick thinking environment for low pay."

Factors That Influenced Employee Turnover

In the South Dakota child care and early education workforce survey, three factors were most frequently cited as contributors to employee turnover: low salaries, the lack of health insurance and paid vacation.



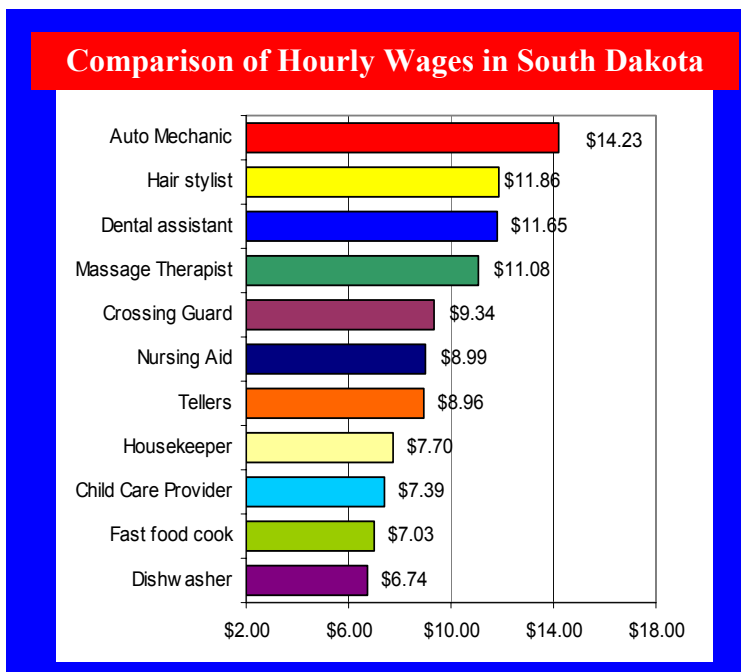
- The median average hourly wage reported for child care assistants was \$6.50; the average for lead teachers was \$6.75 and \$12.00 for directors and supervisors.
- 82% of child care workers do not have health insurance.
- 84% do not receive paid vacation time.

Work related stress was also cited by many survey respondents as a contributor to turnover in early childhood and out-of-school-time programs. A variety of stress-related factors were identified by the survey respondents including the following:

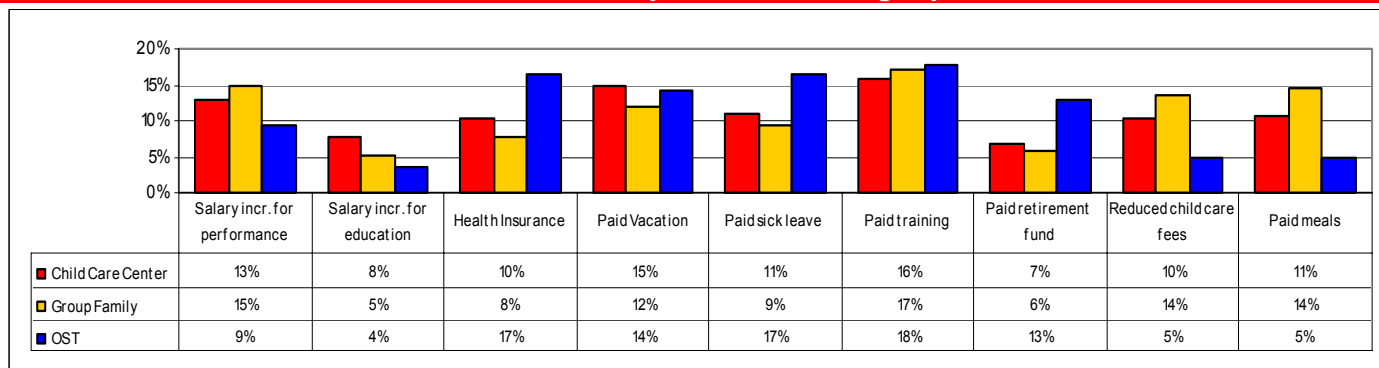
- Programs have limited ability to recruit individuals who possess the knowledge and professional skills to work with children, especially individuals who work with infants and toddlers.
- Children experience a loss and are confused when their caregiver leaves. Children are required to work through the bonding process with a new caregiver.
- Staff burnout is associated with high employee turnover as they are repeatedly required to train and help new caregivers adapt to the program and children.
- Parents worry about children adjusting to a new caregiver.
- Directors re-invest time to the interviewing and hiring process.

The chart entitled “Comparison of Hourly Wages in South Dakota” provides additional insight to the issue of low wages paid to early childhood and out-of-school-time professionals.

- Based on the survey data, the median average hourly wage reported for child care assistants was \$6.50; the average for lead teachers was \$6.75 ; and \$12.00 for directors and supervisors.
- On the South Dakota Jobs website, the state Department of Labor lists an average hourly wage of \$7.49 for child care provider. This wage calculation represents a variety of early childhood employment positions titles; therefore, the hourly wage is not as position specific as the data obtained in the workforce survey.
- When comparing the survey average wage of \$6.50 per hour for classroom assistants to other employment positions in South Dakota, it becomes apparent that individuals who provide assistance in the average child care or out-of-school time program make less per hour than dishwashers, housekeepers, and fast food cooks (positions which require limited training).
- Out-of-school time staff (who work part-time hours and split-shifts) plan and implement safe, healthy, and developmentally appropriate learning experiences for children on a day to day basis but earn less than crossing guards (\$6.50 per hour vs. \$9.34 hour).
- Program directors who manage early childhood program operations, including staff recruitment and supervision as well as assuring quality services for children and families, make less than automotive technicians who repair automobiles (\$12 vs. \$14.23 hourly).



S. D. Workforce Survey Profile: Employee Benefits



Nationwide, as much as half of the child care workforce earn an income at or below the poverty level, and as many as one-third earn minimum wage.

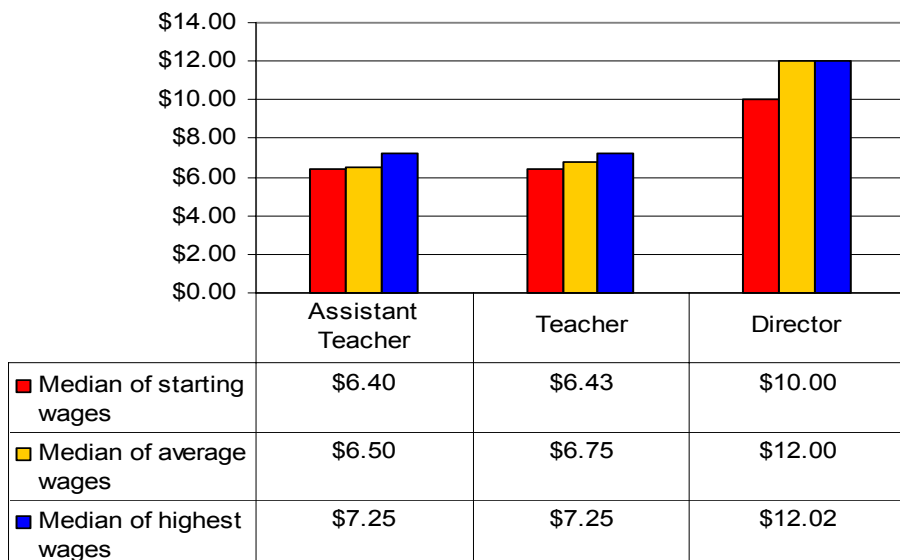
The Turnover Dilemma

Money is the primary focus of the turnover dilemma. Parents want quality care for their children; but, many are limited in the amount that they can afford to pay. Child care and early education programs need a qualified workforce in order to provide quality services to families. However, the majority of early childhood and out-of-school-time programs strive to offer quality care for children on a budget that is severely limited as demonstrated by the following survey findings:



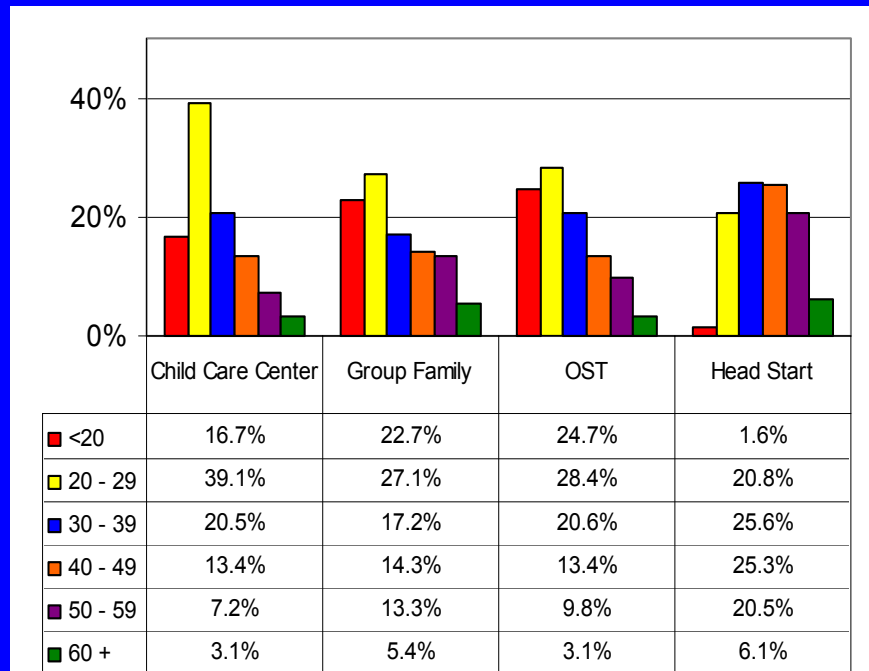
- In most of the child care programs in South Dakota, caregivers begin employment for wages below \$6.50 per hour.
- Based on the workforce survey results, child care providers in South Dakota who earn \$6.50 per hour are working for a wage that is just slightly above the federal poverty level (\$6.31 per hour for a family of two). (Federal Register, February 7, 2003, Volume 68, Number 26)
- The data also indicated that many caregivers receive minimal adjustments in salary over time as reflected in the survey findings that there were only slight differences between the starting, average, and highest wages for assistants and teachers.
- Child care programs spent between 50 and 70% of their operating budget on salaries alone.

S. D. Workforce Survey Profile: Salary Information



***Nationwide, as much as half of the child care workforce earn an income at or below the poverty level, and as many as one-third earn minimum wage.
(Taking on Turnover, Marcy Whitebook & Dan Bellm, 1999)***

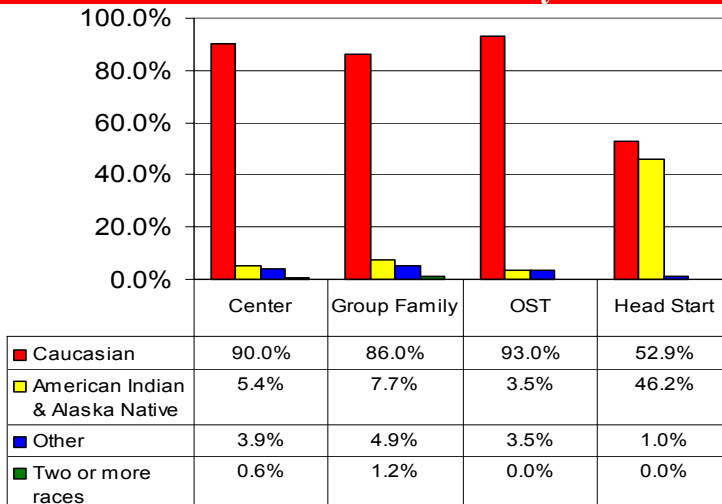
Who is Caring for Children in South Dakota?



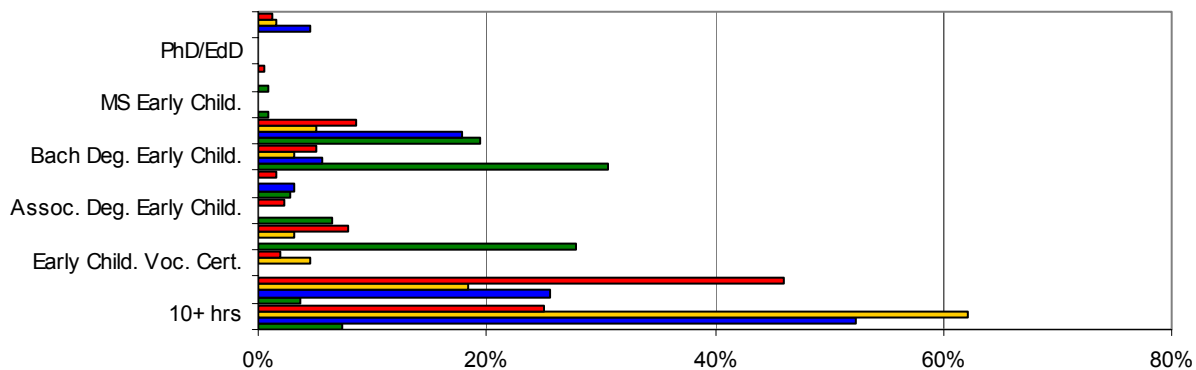
Child care has been traditionally viewed as a female role. Nationwide, few males are employed in the early childhood field. The majority (90%) of caregivers and early educators represented by the South Dakota survey data were Caucasian and 56% were between the ages of 20 and 40. Head Start programs in this state tended to have a larger proportion of employees between 40 and 60 years of age and were also more ethnically diverse. These findings are reflective of other early childhood research studies conducted in the United

States. In a report entitled, "A Call for Excellence" (July 2000), the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) calls for national, state and local policies that encourage a diverse workforce and assure, "Responsive and supportive programs that recognize and respect the whole child and family, their cultural backgrounds, and the community's culture".

Teacher Race/Ethnicity



South Dakota Workforce Survey Profile: Level of Education



	10+ hrs	20+ hrs	Early Child. Voc.	CDA	Assoc. Deg. Early	Assoc. Deg. Other	Bach Deg. Early	Bach Deg. Other	MS Early Child.	MS Other	PhD/Ed D	Other
Child Care Center	25%	46%	2%	8%	2%	2%	5%	9%	0%	1%	0%	1%
Group Family	62%	18%	5%	3%	0%	0%	3%	5%	0%	0%	0%	2%
OST	52%	26%	0%	0%	0%	3%	6%	18%	0%	0%	0%	5%
Head Start	7%	4%	0%	28%	7%	3%	31%	19%	1%	1%	0%	0%

National turnover studies indicate that education contributes directly to the caregiver's ability to provide nurturing care and quality early education. Head Start programs follow federal standards and offer funding to support more advanced education for teachers. The majority (90%) of the Head Start teachers who were represented in the South Dakota survey had achieved a CDA or college degree. In contrast, the vast majority of child care workers represented in the survey findings, had completed only the minimum training required to meet state licensing standards (10 to 20 hours of training annually). These findings raise the question, "Why do so many child care workers complete only the minimum training required?" In South Dakota there are a number of training initiatives that offer continuing education to people who work in the early childhood field. However, the availability of educational opportunities is only one aspect of the turnover dilemma. Continuing education must be linked to fair compensation as cited in a National Association for the Education of Young Children publication, "Preparing Early Childhood Professionals" (2003):



"Salaries, benefits and working conditions create obstacles to the recruitment and retention of capable early childhood professionals who have the education and training to implement high-quality services."

Quality early care and education programs help children achieve greater success academically and socially once they enter school. The quality of care is related to the formal education levels and specialized training of the caregivers / teachers.

(The Children of Cost, Quality, and Outcomes Study Go to School, June 1999)

Director Perspectives On Turnover



Many of the survey respondents shared their perspectives regarding the impact that turnover has within early childhood programs. One Head Start director commented:

“Turnover has a high impact on everyone involved. . . the re-adjustment period puts an enormous amount of stress on everyone. It can take up to a year to re-hire and train a new employee. This still does not provide time for the new employee to reach the “comfort zone” in working with parents and children. Turnover comes at a high cost to any program and community.”

Taking on Turnover: Strategies for Improvement

- Support each program director’s ability to manage turnover by providing specialized training focused on employee recruitment and retention.
- Promote program directors’ understanding of business management in order to enhance the quality and stability of early childhood and school-age programs.
- Explore options that enhance child care providers ability to access affordable health insurance.
- Investigate funding options that, combined with parent fees, will enhance early childhood and school-age programs’ ability to offer competitive salaries and employee benefits.
- Offer diverse continuing education opportunities and provide recognition for caregivers and educators who pursue more advanced education in the fields of early childhood and school-age care.
- Promote community awareness of the economic impact that early childhood, school-age, and Head Start programs have in communities across South Dakota.
- Enhance public awareness of the impact that early education has on children’s development.



To children, turnover means the loss of someone who cared.

Definitions and Terminology

Child care and early education programs in South Dakota:

- ★ Family Child Care Home– (Registered): providing care and supervision of children from more than one unrelated family, in a family home, on a regular basis for part of a day as a supplement to regular parental care. There are no minimum education requirements for the family child care provider. They must be at least 18 years of age and complete 6 hours of training annually.
- ★ Group Family Child Care Home– (Licensed): providing group care and supervision of children on a regular basis for part of a day as a supplement to regular parental care for 13 to 20 children. There are no minimum education requirements for directors. All staff are required to complete 10 hours of training annually.
- ★ Child Care Center– (Licensed): providing group care and supervision of children on a regular basis for part of a day as a supplement to regular parental care, for 21 or more children. The education requirements for a center director is a minimum of a CDA credential. Program staff are required to complete at least 20 hours of training annually.
- ★ Out-of-School Time (OST) Programs: providing care and supervision of children on a regular basis before and after regular school hours. The minimum education requirements for an OST supervisor in charge of planning center activities is a BS degree or CDA credential. Program staff are required to complete 10 hours of training annually.
- ★ Head Start Programs: Head Start began with a task force recommendation in 1964, for the development of a federally sponsored preschool program to meet the needs of disadvantaged children. Head Start and Early Head Start are comprehensive child development programs that serve children from birth to age 5, pregnant women, and their families. They are child-focused programs and have the overall goal of increasing social competence and school readiness of young children in low-income families.

Other Terminology:

- ★ Infant and Toddler teachers: individuals who are responsible to provide care, and plan early education activities, for children between 4 weeks and 36 months of ages. These individuals may also be referred to as lead or head caregivers if they do not possess a degree which qualifies them to be a certified teacher.
- ★ Preschool teachers: individuals who are responsible to provide care, and plan early education activities, for children 3 through 5 years of ages. These individuals may also be referred to as lead or head caregivers if they do not possess a degree which qualifies them to be a certified teacher.
- ★ Classroom Assistants: individuals who assist teachers and lead caregivers with the child care routines and early education experiences in a child care, Head Start, or out-of-school-time program. These individuals may also be referred to as Classroom Aides.
- ★ Program Director or Supervisor: individuals who are responsible for overseeing program staff and the daily operation of a child care, out-of-school-time or Head Start programs.
- ★ Child Development Associate Credential (CDA): is a nationally recognized early childhood professional credential awarded to individuals who have achieved standards of competent behaviors, practices, and attitudes for adults who work with young children. The CDA assessment and credentialing process is administered by the Council for Professional Recognition based in Washington, D.C. Individuals who wish to obtain a CDA credential must complete a minimum of 120 clock hours of formal education, provided by an agency or organization with expertise in early childhood teacher preparation in addition to 480 hours of work experience in a licensed or registered early childhood program.
- ★ Early Care and Education Apprenticeship: A two year training program that requires 300 hours of formal education and 4000 hours of work experience in the field of early childhood education. The apprenticeship program is sponsored by the United States Department of Labor and is designed to provide applied education and on-the-job training to prepare individuals to work effectively with young children and their families.

The South Dakota Alliance for Children: Supporting Child Care, Early Education & School-Age Care

The South Dakota Child Care and Early Education Workforce Survey was sponsored by the South Dakota Alliance for Children. The Alliance was established in 2002 as a statewide coalition of organizations, providers, professionals, and parents advocating for policies, programs, and funding that will achieve an affordable, seamless, unified, high quality child care and early education system in South Dakota for children birth through 8th grade. The Alliance membership has adopted the following goals for children, families, and professionals in this state:

- Goal 1: To enhance the stability and quality of the child care and early education workforce in South Dakota.
- Goal 2: To increase awareness of child development and the importance of quality child care and early education.
- Goal 3: To enhance the quality of family child care services in South Dakota.
- Goal 4: To establish adequate and stable funding for child care and early education in South Dakota.
- Goal 5: To support the healthy development of children in early childhood and out-of-school time settings.
- Goal 6: To increase the availability and quality of infant and toddler care and education in South Dakota.
- Goal 7: To increase the quality of care and education for children ages 3-5 in South Dakota.
- Goal 8: To increase the quality and availability of out-of-school time programs provided to school-age youth from K-8th grade.

For more information about the Alliance, please contact:

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